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Cover Page Footnote

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Cellphilm and Building Solidarity with 2SLGBTQ+ Youth to Speak Back to Historical Erasures in New Brunswick's Social Studies Classrooms and Schools

Casey Burkholder
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How does the erasure of a person's or community's histories work to solidify their systemic mistreatment? What does it mean to be a social studies teacher who seeks to disrupt systemic injustice by addressing erasures and moving learners toward collective action? In the context of New Brunswick, Canada, the existing social studies curriculum prioritizes the experiences and histories of white men who settled the territory, and white men (and a few white women) who contributed to the establishment of the ongoing settler state (Burkholder & Thorpe, 2019). What might we do, as social studies teachers and teacher educators, in order to disrupt taken-for-granted narratives? How might we work to disrupt the erasure of people and communities in the spaces where we live, teach, and work?

What I am interested in doing with youth and with pre-service teachers through the *cellphilm* method (the combination of cellphone + film production + prompt or intention, see MacEntee et al., 2016; 2019 for more) is telling 2SLGBTQ+ stories that are not currently valorized within the existing curriculum in order to disrupt heteronormativity – the problematic assumption that heterosexuality is the default (Arvin et al., 2013) – and settler colonialism – a framework that explains the ways that colonialism began with white settlers occupying Indigenous lands continues today through the establishment and continuation of private property laws, resource extraction, violence against lands, gender-based violence (Konsmo & Pacheco, 2016), governmental policies (Glenn, 2015; Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 2006) – within New Brunswick, Canada's social studies education. In this paper, I describe a cellphilm production project with 2SLGBTQ+ young people to confront and disrupt queer erasures and heteronormative taken-for-granted narratives in New Brunswick's social studies curricula.

New Brunswick's Kindergarten to Grade 12 social studies curricula erases the myriad histories and experiences of the province's 2SLGBTQ+ communities. It also erases the experiences and histories of African Canadian New Brunswickers, and has only begun to somewhat address the erasure of Mi'kmaq and Wolastokiyik peoples from the existing curriculum. Building on these absences, the study I describe in this article, analyzes how 2SLGBTQ+ young people (aged 14-17) created cellphilms (cellphone + mobile film production) in response to these erasures. The study also highlights the production of cellphilms and lesson

plans that are specifically tailored to broad and existing curricular objectives within the New Brunswick social studies curriculum.

Through a close reading of one youth-produced cellphilm called *Coming Out*, and a collaboratively-produced cellphilm called *Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554*, I explore art production as a mode of speaking back to 2SLGBTQ+ absences within social studies educational research, and cellphilm production as a method to move people toward action. I describe the ethical processes in working with youth and community collaborators to create media and build a web-based archive of cellphilms that capture the ways that queer spaces and stories already exist in New Brunswick, as well as speaking back to these young people's experiences in schools and society through art production. I advocate for a more expansive antiracist and a critical queering of the curriculum that disrupts settler colonial narratives and embraces gender-inclusive youth resistance. However, in this work, it is important to problematize the ways in which the youth-produced cellphilms in the project highlighted the experiences of white queer youth, and as a result, with a community collaborator, I have worked to disrupt the further marginalization of 2SLGBTQ+ people who are also Black, Indigenous or people of color who live and work within this territory. In the study, I ask: How might engaging in media and art production with young people—and screening and exhibiting these productions in online and community spaces—work to disrupt the ways that youth are often discursively constructed as apathetic or unconcerned in relation to history (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2010), and support 2SLGBTQ+ youth to claim a stake in creating solidarities, belonging, and community-making within and beyond their classrooms? What is required for youth-produced media about queer stories and spaces to create, support or extend networks of solidarity, belonging and resistance in the face of school and curricular-based exclusions?

Placing the *Queer Histories Matter* Project in Conversation with Existing Teacher Practice

Samantha Cutrara, the guest editor, has asked authors included within this Special Issue to engage with teacher's articles about the opportunities and challenges to teaching history in a Canadian context, and think about putting these articles in conversation with our studies. One of the articles that made me think about my own teaching and research practice emerged from Melanie Williams' piece, "Am I Canadian" (2021).

Williams (2021) suggests that her students are disengaged from history classrooms as they struggle to see the relevancy, or see themselves, reflected within texts and curricula. I see these omissions of particular communities' histories and experiences as purposeful erasures that seek to reaffirm white supremacy in an uncomplicated settler colonial framework (Glenn, 2015; Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 2006). Settler colonialism established heteropatriarchal gender expectations that policed and problematized existing gender and sexual diversity within Indigenous communities (Arvin et al., 2013; Morgensen, 2012; TallBear, 2020). Kim TallBear

(2020) recently highlighted the marriage between settler colonialism and *heteropatriarchy* – the assumption that “heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent” Arvin, Tuck & Morill, 2013, p. 13). To emphasize this, TallBear wrote:

I come from a culture without a gender binary traditionally and with multiple “gender/sexuality” roles, none of which are [by the way] “trans” or “cis” or any other English words or the non-Indigenous constructions they name.

Settler colonialism – and heteropatriarchy – is supported by provincial history curricula that explain colonization in uncomplicated ways – for example downplaying the role of slavery in settling New Brunswick (Spray, 1972) – and suggest that injustices were an unpleasant, but necessary component of settling the territory that is currently called Canada. Settler colonialism is enshrined in Canadian provincial social studies curricula through uncomplicated narratives of contact and processes of settlement (Carleton, 2011), the presentation of Indigenous peoples as historical, not communities and people who continue to live in the face of government policies of forced removal, containment, systemic injustice and violence on bodies and land (Konsmo & Pacheco, 2016).

In her reflection, “Am I Canadian,” Melanie Williams (2021) also highlights the ways in which students’ lack of interest in social studies classrooms is often pinned on their smartphone usage and their engagement in social media. Within this article, I seek to show how I work with young people’s existing media practices—including smartphone filmmaking, or cellphilming, and sharing these short films on social media in order to claim discursive space and share their ways of knowing and producing. In the work that I describe, here, I am working with 2SLGBTQ⁺ youth in order to confront problematic historical explanations and disrupt 2SLGBTQ⁺ erasures in social studies classrooms and curricula in the context of New Brunswick. In this work, drawing on Amanda Reid (2019), I acknowledge that settler colonialism is responsible for the historic and ongoing policing of gender and sexuality within the research space, Fredericton, New Brunswick—unceded and unsurrendered Wolastikiyik territory.

Context for the Inquiry

Queer Histories Matter: Queering social studies in New Brunswick, Canada is a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Development Grant and New Brunswick Innovation Fund Emerging Projects funded research project that works with 2SLGBTQ⁺ youth

¹ 2SLGBTQ⁺ is an acronym that includes the identities of Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer, and the plus signifies the sexualities and gender identities that are not encompassed by the terms Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Transgender or Queer.

(14-17) and pre-service teachers and community collaborators to create media and art materials that speak back to the erasure of 2SLGBTQ+ people in New Brunswick social studies curricula and classrooms. In the *Queer Histories Matter* project, we acknowledge the everyday activism of local teachers and students who are actively confronting heteronormativity within their schools and classrooms. However, we also situate our study in a larger context of school-based exclusion of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, staff and teachers. In their work on LGBTQ+-inclusive education in Canada, Catherine Taylor et al. (2016) found that many teachers believed deeply that LGBTQ+ people deserved rights, but did not “approve of LGBTQ+ inclusive education,” which led Taylor and her colleagues to ask a series of questions:

What does it mean that roughly 1 in 6 teachers is neutral or opposed to LGBTQ-inclusive education, but far fewer assert that LGBTQ rights are not human rights? Do some educators think a safe and respectful education is not a human right? Are some educators opposed not only to LGBTQ rights but also to the Charter² itself? (p. 129)

The *Queer Histories Matter* project is also deeply influenced by the work of Alicia LaPointe (2016), whose work on queering social studies examines Ontario’s school-based Gay-Straight Alliances and student activism in order to disrupt heteronormative pedagogies usually employed in social studies classrooms. Disrupting heteronormativity in this context requires a discussion of colonization, settler colonialism, and *homonormativity* – the centering of the experiences of queer white people (Sadika et al., 2020).

In this project, I acknowledge the ways in which colonization and settler colonialism disrupted existing gender and sexual diversity practiced by Two Spirited peoples in Wabanaki Territories, including Wolastokuk, where our study is located (Reid, 2019). Our media creations have been inspired by 2SLGBTQ+ youth experiences of social studies and school in general. In queering the teaching of social studies in New Brunswick, I suggest that we must do so by resisting homonormativity through an examination of intersecting issues, including race and class. In what follows, I set up the theoretical framework of the study, highlighting the importance of critical queer theory (Sullivan, 2003) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 2017).

² Enshrined in 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms establishes fundamental freedoms and rights for citizens including protecting on the grounds of sexual identity and gender diversity. Protected within the charter, people are to be “treated with the same respect, dignity and consideration (i.e. without discrimination), regardless of personal characteristics such as race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, residency, marital status or citizenship.” (Government of Canada, 2021).

Theoretical Framework: Intersectionality and Critical Queer Theory

The *Queer Histories Matter* project is grounded in critical queer theory that resists assimilation (Sullivan, 2003) or homogenizing narratives that diminish the differences between participants' and communities' histories and experiences. We highlight the importance in intersectional theorizing (Crenshaw, 2017) – the ways in which multiple identities (race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, class, etc.) combine in order to produce experiences of oppression or privilege depending on the system, space, or context – in order to understand the breadth of experiences participants' highlighted in their cellphilms, and also in creating additional cellphilms that center race, ethnicity, gender identity, and class more explicitly. Drawing on Nikki Sullivan's (2003) theorizing of critical queer theory, our project seeks to *queer*, or “make strange, to frustrate, to counteract, to delegitimize, to camp up heteronormative knowledges and institutions, and the subjectivities and socialites that are informed by them and inform them” (p. vi).

Queer theory encourages a questioning of the status quo, and an interrogation into taken-for-granted systemic, institutional, and relational ways of organizing society (Britzman, 1995; Johnson, 2007; Sedgwick, 2008). Critical queer theory seeks to disrupt homonormativity and recenters the experiences of queer Black, Indigenous, and people of color (Sullivan, 2003). A critical approach to queering social studies looks like disrupting heteronormativity (LaPointe, 2016), and it also looks like addressing the problem of whiteness and systemic racism within and beyond schools (Nadal et al., 2020). As Bidushy Sadika et al. (2020) highlight in their review of Canadian empirical literature on 2SLGBTQ+ supports and microaggressions:

homonormativity constructs sexual minority identities as “White” (Donelle, 2017; Pardoe, 2011), and this concept has been used to exemplify the ways certain sexual minority identities have become conventional and normative, by amalgamating into mainstream capitalist cultures (Bettani, 2015)... LGBTQ persons of Color are exposed to double marginalization, as their LGBTQ identities are considered unnatural, and/or their trans identities are excluded due to gender binary norms, and their racial and ethnic identities are invisible from mainstream (capitalist) LGBTQ discourses. (pp. 113-114)

Participatory visual research methodologies can work with participants and communities to create and broadly disseminate visual texts that decenter hegemonic ways of knowing and representing. These methods capture the experiences of producers, and are often shared with larger publics. In the next section, I describe how cellphilmmethod can act as an intervention (Altenburg et al., 2018) and disrupt the erasure of 2SLGBTQ+ histories within and beyond New Brunswick classrooms and schools.

Participatory Visual Research: Cellphilmmethod

Participatory visual research methodologies engage participants in visual production in response to a prompt, and to share participants' ways of knowing, and understanding in public-facing and engaging ways (Mitchell et al., 2017). In producing visual texts that are later shared in public spaces, participants can speak back to discourses and policies that affect their lives (Mitchell & de Lange, 2013) through visual production. Sharing and disseminating participant-produced visual texts offers a way to connect academic research with policy makers and potentially with larger publics (de Lange & Mitchell, 2012; Milne et al., 2012; Mistry et al., 2016), however, participants' visual productions must be understood in relation to visual cultures and cannot be divorced from their social, political, economic, or spatial contexts (Rose, 2014). In sharing participants' experiences and realities, participatory visual research has been used as a mode of data gathering in order to shape effective and people-centered policies (Lorenz & Kolb, 2009; Wang, 1999). By engaging with devices like cellphones as filmmaking technologies and research tools to address issues relating to representation and erasure of 2SLGBTQ+ youth, cellfilm production (see: MacEntee et al., 2016; 2019), the practice makes visual issues of equity, representation, and gender in education in general, and within critical social studies teaching.

Cellfilms are short films made with a cellphone that take up a prompt and use mobile technologies in order to create a visual representation that responds intentionally to that prompt (MacEntee et al., 2019). Screenings and sharing participant produced cellfilms are a critical part of the method (Burkholder & Rogers, 2020; Mitchell & de Lange, 2013; Schwab-Cartas & Mitchell 2015) as cellfilms have the potential people toward critical conversations, and hopefully toward collective action. Gillian Rose (2001; 2016) provides a conceptual framework for analyzing the cellfilms that emerge from the *New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter* project. Gillian Rose (2012) created the discourse analysis II framework, which describes a mode of analyzing visual work by attending to three specific sites: production, image, and audience. In analyzing the *New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter* cellfilms, I focus first on analyzing two cellfilms, *Coming Out*, produced by a 14-year-old participant, and *Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554*, produced by Maria Nazareth Felipe de Araujo and myself, at the site of production, image, and audience (Rose, 2012).

In this work I analyze *New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter* and *Gender Affirming Care* at the site of production – or how, why, and by whom a visual text is produced (Rose, 2012). I analyze both cellfilms at the site of the image – which attends to the way that the visual text is composed (Rose, 2012). Through a close reading of the two cellfilms, I highlight the ways in which animated images were used as anonymizing strategies were employed by both filmmakers. Finally, I analyze the two cellfilms at the site of the audience – which explores the life of the visual texts in relation to their unfolding meanings and relation to other texts when it reaches new audiences by examining our *Queer Cellfilms NB* YouTube Channel, a participatory archive of the cellfilms – where participants and I share the password and co-curate the texts.

Rose (2012) argues that each of these three sites of the image – production, image, and audience – are influenced by technological (how the text is made), compositional (what the text is comprised of) and social modes (how the text is situated in relation to other texts in the social world). In what follows, I describe how the cellphlilms were created, what each cellphilm is composed of (in terms of visuals and content), and how we might understand the two cellphlilms as a mode of speaking back to the larger social world through audiencing³ on YouTube and through our project website.

Data Collection

In December 2018, PhD student Amelia Thorpe, artist Nathaniel Hartley, and myself co-organized a weekend-long workshop with 2SLGBTQ+ youth in response to the question, “Where Are Our Histories?” We began by creating stencils that responded to the question as a kind of brainstorming prompt for the cellphlilms that we would eventually produce (see also, Burkholder & Thorpe, 2019). We created three cellphlilms, one that was collaboratively produced by the entire group, *Nackawic Needs a GSA Now!*⁴ and two cellphlilms that were produced independently by participants. In what follows, I will describe one of the independently produced cellphlilms, Alia’s *Coming Out*⁵, which was produced on the second day of the workshop. At the end of the workshop, we held a screening for participants’ families (see Burkholder & Rogers, 2020) and uploaded the cellphlilms to a shared YouTube channel, which we decided to call, *Queer Cellphlilms NB*.

Then, in the summer of 2020 – during the Covid-19 Pandemic – I worked with a local filmmaker, Maria Nazareth Felipe de Araujo (Naz), to create short cellphlilms to address existing broad social studies curriculum outcomes, between Kindergarten and Grade 12, in order to purposefully queer the existing curricular goals. These cellphilm collaborations have also sought to intentionally discuss race and class alongside gender and sexuality by creating cellphlilms that explore histories that center Black, Indigenous, and people of color’s contributions to global and local 2SLGBTQ+ activism and histories.

To create the cellphilm, *Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554*, I began by finding space within the existing Grade 7 social studies curriculum that focuses on the broad topic of “Empowerment.” The first expectation was useful for this, specifically: “7.1.1 Explore the general concept of empowerment,” (New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2005, p. 22). Then, I brainstormed potential topics to cover and sent a

³ Within the participatory visual literature, the term ‘audiencing’ means the act of sharing visual texts with audiences, and thinking through their responses (see: Burkholder & Rogers, 2020).

⁴ To see *Nackawic Needs a GSA NOW!* visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8hg8Qzf1U4>

⁵ To see *Coming Out*, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5OtZTny3I>

list of them to Naz for feedback,” What about LGBTQ+ activism in the community?” I wrote, “Maybe something about Clinic 554⁶? Maybe how Clinic 554 supports queer and trans health?”

Then, Naz began drafting a script about Clinic 554 and sent it back to me for feedback. We had a series of Zoom conversations where we brainstormed how the cellphilm might be composed visually, before we finalized the script. Then, Naz produced the cellphilm, and sent it to me for feedback. When we agreed that the piece was finalized, we shared it on the *Queer Cellphilms NB* YouTube Channel and more broadly on other social media sites including Twitter.

Following the production of the project’s films, PhD student Allen Chase and I co-wrote lesson plans related to this cellphilm that we shared directly from our website. These lesson plans were designed to encouraging teachers to think about how they might incorporate youth-produced cellphilms into their classrooms in explicit and serious ways. On this website we also offer a series of toolkits that encourage teachers to work with students to produce media in response to our works. A group of my colleagues – Dr. Paula Kristmanson, Dr. Karla Culligan and Dr. Josée Le Bouthillier – shared a practice that they developed to share documentaries that they co-produced in a research setting with in-service teachers. The team created conversational guides to accompany their short documentaries, and shared these with an informal research group (Kristmanson et al., 2019). Using this strategy, I developed conversation guides for each of the cellphilms shared on the *Queer Cellphilms NB* YouTube Channel, so that teachers might engage learners in conversation about the themes arising from the cellphilms. I have shared these conversation guides as well as a link to all of the project’s cellphilms on the [New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter](#) website.

Within the *New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter* website, another strategy that we have implemented is the creation of lesson plans that are tied to existing and broad curriculum objectives. Although it is true that 2SLGBTQ+ people, communities, and histories are completely missing from the existing social studies curriculum, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (Burkholder & Thorpe, 2019), there are spaces where 2SLGBTQ+ experiences, histories, and community activism could be brought in. As a result, we – myself and PhD student Allen Chase – co-created short lesson plans that seek to queer the teaching of social studies by bending, or critically interpreting existing curricular outcomes. We have created lesson plans that draw from the Queer Heritage Initiative of New Brunswick’s archives (housed at the New Brunswick Provincial Archives, see Green, 2018) and queer, trans & non-binary youth and pre-service

⁶ Clinic 554 is a gender-affirming general practice run by Dr. Adrian Edgar specializing in stigma free reproductive healthcare, including medical and surgical abortions and providing gender affirming care, including hormone therapy. The Clinic closed in October 2020 as a result of being underfunded by the provincial government, who refuses to reimburse expenses related to abortion – contravening the Canada Health Act (Chalker, 2020).

teacher produced media (stencils, zines and cellphilms). Tied to existing curricular objectives, and organized by grade and course, we encourage educators to use, share, and upcycle our lesson plans, and artwork and continue to work collaboratively to queer social studies teaching in New Brunswick. Through the creation and sharing of DIY (do it yourself) media productions – cellphilms – with youth and with community collaborators, as well as creating lesson plans and toolkits for public uptake, the Queer Histories Matter website seeks to critically queer the teaching of social studies in New Brunswick.

In the next section, I engage in a visual analysis – discourse analysis II (Rose, 2016) – of Alia’s cellphilm, *Coming Out*, and our collaboratively produced cellphilm, *Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554* to explore the opportunities and challenges to engaging in cellphilm production as an intervention (Altenburg et al, 2018) to critically queer the teaching of social studies in New Brunswick.

Cellphilmaking to Disrupt 2SLGBTQ+Erasures

Coming Out

Alia – perhaps a quick intro to who they are – created the cellphilm, *Coming Out*, which begins with a voiceover. There is no music in the background of the cellphilm. The images that make up the cellphilm are found images from around the workshop space – an art classroom at a University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Alia begins: “People say don’t be afraid, but we’re always afraid. We have so many thoughts building up in our head that we just can’t let it out. We are forever silent, we cannot speak.” This voiceover is paired with an image of a painting of white teenager whose mouth is obscured by a mask. The young person is foregrounded, and painted in black and white. In the background, colorful, chaotic, and abstract paint splashes create a feeling of chaos.

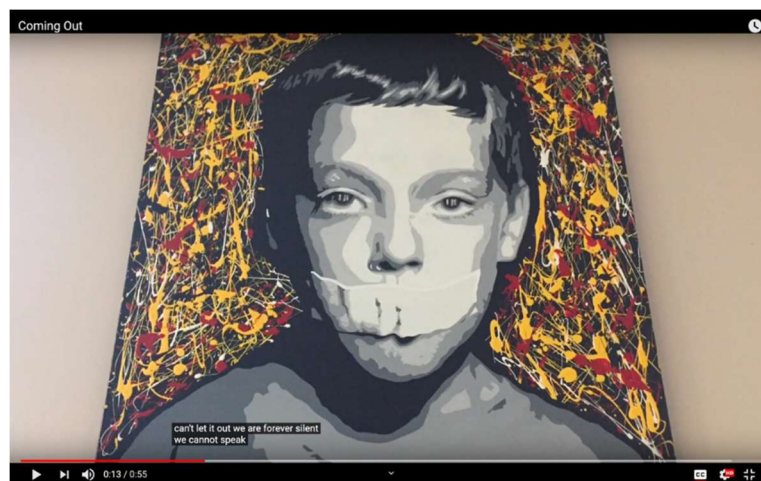


Figure 1: Still from “Coming Out”

Alia describes modes of articulating a sense of identity through creating sculptures and through listening to music—modes of making the self amidst the feelings of chaos that exist within school spaces. Alia continues, “...We are sad, lonely, and depressed all of the time” while a black and white charcoal drawing is foregrounded. In the image (Figure 2), a white person is depicted wearing a head wrap, and their gaze is cast downward, while their mouth is turned to a small frown.

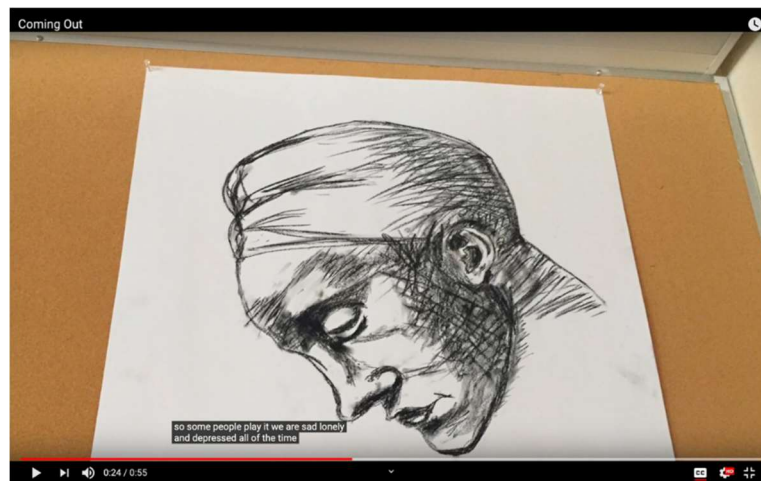


Figure 2: Still from “Coming Out”

The cellphilm’s tone shifts. Alia continues: “Sometimes, we are happy and joyful and just keep smiling. Other [time]s, we have too many faces to describe. So many eyes, so many faces that just keep looking at us in weird ways...”. This voiceover is paired with a black and white abstract stencil image (Figure 3), where an iris is repeated several times within the image frame.

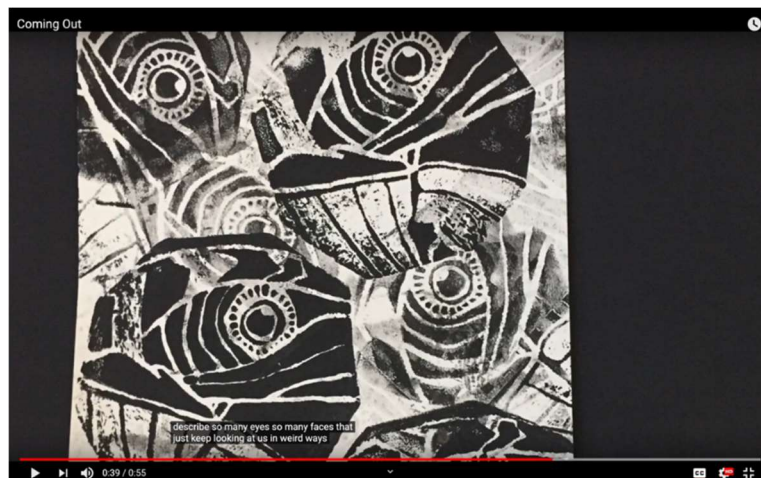


Figure 3: Still from “Coming Out”

In responding to the prompt, “Where Are Our Histories?” Alia noted that she wanted to share an example of what it feels like to come out within a school space. First she brainstormed, wrote a script, and began filming. After her cellphilm was produced, and Alia edited the piece within her cellphone, we held a small screening for participants’ families at the end of the workshop. As she was setting up the film, Alia noted, “my short movie was about expression and people’s feelings about coming out and coming out about their sexualities. I hope you enjoyed it!”

After the screening, the *Where Are Our Histories* group decided to create a public facing YouTube Channel, called [Queer Cellphils NB](#). The goal of the channel was to create a space where teachers and community members—including youth—might be able to see what we had created, might be able to bring these into school classrooms and GSAs, and might be able to work toward interrupting the erasure of 2SLGBTQ+ experiences from social studies specifically, and school spaces more generally. We also shared the password to the site amongst the producers (all of the participants at the “Where Are Our Histories” workshop). This means that at any time, without my intervention, participants could edit, add to, or remove their cellphilm from public view.

When we uploaded the cellphilm to the Queer Cellphils NB channel, we needed to add some context for the film, for audiences who might not be familiar with the project. As a collective, at the end of the workshop, we described uploaded the cellphilm, and added text to describe it: “this is a cellphilm for people who want to be accepted while exploring their sexuality and gender identity.” As of October 1, 2020, almost two years after its production and upload, the cellphilm has received 40 views, 5 likes, and no public comments on YouTube.

Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554

The second cellphilm that I describe here, [Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554](#), uses animation in order to explain Clinic 554 to students, as well as highlighting why gender affirming care is important for 2SLGBTQ+ community members for an audience of Grade 7 students. Produced to address a curriculum outcome on “empowerment,” Naz employs a variety of animation strategies in order to explore the themes in a compelling way. The opening shot is of a white board and Naz’s hands (Figure 4), where she draws and writes along with the dialogue:

Have you ever heard of Clinic 554 and its importance to LGBTQ+ communities in New Brunswick? Clinic 554 is a clinic in Fredericton that has been providing health care to much of the province’s LGBTQ+ communities. Clinic 554 has been around since 2015 when Dr. Adrian Edgar and Valerie Edelman started the practice. (00:00 – 00:32)

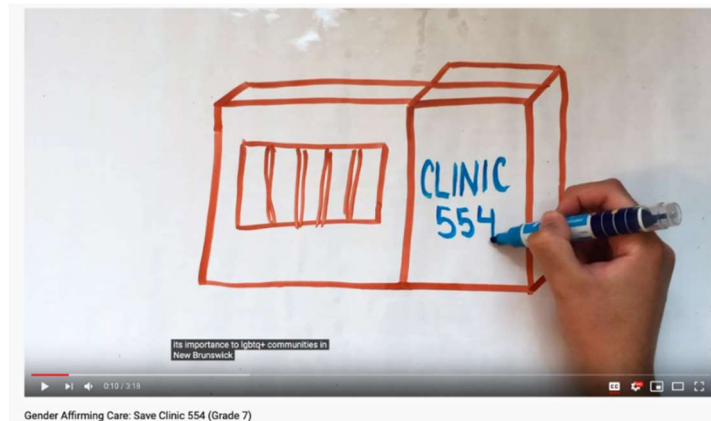


Figure 4: Still from “Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554”

Next, the terms “gender affirming care” are defined for a middle school audience. Similarly, throughout the cellphilm, concepts are defined, and presented in an informational way for grade 7 students. For example, the narrator shares:

“Gender affirming care” means that a person’s gender will be respected and acknowledged while they are receiving health care services. Some of the gender affirming care at the Clinic includes medical appointments, hormone replacement therapy, counseling services, and pre and post-surgical care. Above all, Clinic 554 offers a stigma-free and barrier-free access to sexual and reproductive health services. The Clinic is an importance place in our community. (00:44-01:10)

The narrator explains that Clinic 554 offers services for all of New Brunswick, and highlights the fact that gender affirming care should be available in all healthcare settings. Currently, gender-affirming care is lacking in New Brunswick, which has led community members from centers across the province to come to New Brunswick’s capital city of Fredericton to receive care (Yamoah & Renic, 2020).



Figure 5: Still from “Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554”

The goal of the *Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554* cellphilm is to encourage conversation about structural inequalities and systemic injustice within a social studies classroom and to move students – as a collective – toward action as an example of what empowerment can look like in action. Highlighting an action-oriented approach to empowerment, the cellphilm ends with a series of questions directed at Grade 7 students (Figure 6):

What can we do together as classmates and New Brunswickers to ensure that our LGBTQ+ friends, neighbours, and community members receive excellent and affirming health care? What kinds of steps can we take as community members to help to Save Clinic 554? What other activist projects matter to you?
(02:31-2:56)

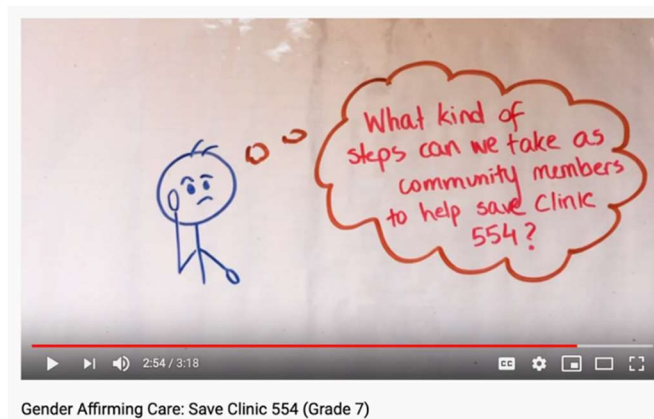


Figure 6: Still from “Gender Affirming Care: Save Clinic 554”

The goal of the cellphilm is to encourage an action-oriented Grade 7 Social Studies classroom, which can interrupt curricular erasures, makes space for complex discussions, and works with young people as co-producers who are as deeply knowledgeable about their own communities, worlds, and futures. As of October 1, 2020, the cellphilm has received 141 views, 12 likes, 2 dislikes, and no comments on YouTube.

Unfortunately, the Clinic has been forced to close in October 2020 – meaning that gender affirming care is not guaranteed. Also, due to an October 2020 Covid-19 outbreak in Moncton, New Brunswick – where 2 of the 3 hospitals that New Brunswickers can receive abortion care from are located – gender affirming reproductive care is severely lacking, especially during the Pandemic. Recently, bus service has been cut to these centres, further marginalizing folks who seek abortion services, and do not have access to personal vehicles (CBC News, 2021).

Analyzing the Cellphilms

In the *Where Are Our Histories* study, I ask: How might engaging in media and art production with young people—and screening and exhibiting these productions in online and community spaces—work to counter dominant forms of apathy and denial, and support youth to claim a

stake in creating solidarities, belonging, and community-making? What is required for youth-produced media about queer stories and spaces to create, support or extend networks of solidarity, belonging and resistance in the face of school and curricular-based exclusions?

In responding to these questions, I begin by expanding upon the ways in which Alia's cellphilm, *Coming Out* employs found imagery in order to repurpose images and tell a compelling story. *Coming Out*, highlights what it can feel like to be a person who is both queer and young in a society that tends to infantilize youth experience, can be brought into the Grade 7 social studies curriculum as the overarching theme of the year is on "Empowerment."

If we look at Alia's youth-produced cellphilm on coming out as an example of an individual intervention into her schooling experiences, we can see the way that cellphilm production and sharing cellphilms broadly on YouTube and through screenings act as a way of speaking back to the erasure of 2SLGBTQ+ experiences in history classes and schools. *Coming Out* offers a personal viewpoint, and employs anonymizing strategies – repurposing art around an art classroom – so that the producer's identity is protected. There is something deeply vulnerable about the text, including the soft tones in which the narration is spoken, and the ways that the images selected work to tell the story. With the addition of her narration, the images Alia uses in the cellphilm take on new meanings than when they were originally produced.

Alia offered comments at the cellphilm screening for parents at the end of the December 2018 workshop, so that she was able to contextualize her piece, and provide additional context about how she took up the prompt, "Where Are Our Histories?" We have screened the piece at the 2019 Pink Lobster LGBTQ+ Film Festival and at a Queer Heritage Initiative of New Brunswick Film Festival in 2020. However, when the cellphilm is viewed on our YouTube Channel, audiences who view the cellphilms do not have the opportunity to ask questions of the producer, and may take away their own meanings, including those that may be in opposition to the filmmaker's intent. The challenge with sharing participant-produced work without providing additional context is that audiences might take away different meanings than the producer anticipated. Of course, audiences make new meanings when they engage with any text, as each audience member bring their own experiences to the text. These interactions between producers and viewers are an important part of cellphilm method. The production of and sharing of this cellphilm offers a personal intervention into the silencing and erasure of 2SLGBTQ+ experiences in social studies classrooms.

Cellphilms as Interventions for Social Studies Teaching

In my experience in sharing youth-produced cellphilms with teachers, I have found that the deep or critical meanings that producers put into their cellphilms are sometimes ignored (see Burkholder & Rogers, 2020). Instead, I have noticed a prevalence of surface level readings where the cellphilm's messages are obscured, and instead the audience tends to focus on how the producers are "brave" for sharing, or likely "empowered" by the process. These surface level

readings are worth avoiding in social studies classrooms, so I was left to wonder, what can I do to support complex questioning and deep reflection about the cellphilms within social studies classrooms—particularly when neither the producers, or myself are sharing the texts?

One of the primary objectives of the *New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter* website is to encourage teachers to take up the youth and pre-service teacher produced art and cellphilms, and think about incorporating them into their own classrooms. Ideally, teachers could work with their students through these modes of art production, to articulate their ways of knowing, and modes of understanding, and also to create texts in response to the existing cellphilms. These practices of sharing and co-producing might encourage critical community building and solidarity making. If not only the stories, but the modes of storytelling and story making are brought into the social studies classroom, we see an opportunity for heteronormative and cisnormative discourses and practices to be interrupted, and erasures to be confronted.

Some Concluding Thoughts

In the dedication of Elijah Adiv Edelman's (2020) book, *Trans Vitalities*, they write, "may this text incite readers to action, to question the validity of academic expertise, and to commit meaningful resources towards both" (vi). Through the production, dissemination, and archiving of cellphilms, this project aims to incite New Brunswickers to action, both in and out of the classroom. Returning to Melanie Williams' arguments about student disengagement and cellphone usage in her piece, "Am I Canadian," I hope that in sharing the 2SLGBTQ+ young people's cellphilms has shown that working with young people's existing media practices—including smartphone filmmaking, or cellphilming, and sharing these short films on social media acts as a kind of activism where young people create and share media to to claim discursive space and share their ways of knowing and producing.

Within this action oriented research, the project seeks to work with New Brunswickers—both within and beyond the social studies classroom—to question the validity of particular histories especially at the expense of others. What might it look like to make space for action and challenging the validity of settler histories, heteropatriarchy, transphobia et al within the existing social studies curricula and classrooms?

Through engaging with young people's everyday media making practices (MacEntee, et al., 2016; 2019) and turning this practice intentionally toward a prompt, "Where are our histories?", I have worked with queer youth to center their own experiences, and to work collaboratively to create a YouTube channel of our cellphilms, called *Queer Cellphilms NB*. By sharing this YouTube channel, as well as creating a website called *New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter*, I have worked with youth to co-create and co-curate resources directed at teachers as a kind of intervention (Altenburg et al., 2018) where teachers may be able to bring young people's media directly into their social studies classrooms. We have also created a "Call for Collaborations" component to the website where we ask folks who engage with the website

to create stencils, zines, and cellphilms in response to the art we have produced. In this way, the website will be ever growing, acting as another interruption to address the erasure of 2SLGBTQ+ histories and build critical solidarities. A particular drawback to the existing youth-produced media produced within the study is that the majority of participants are white and trans and/or white and queer. The 2SLGBTQ+ community within our context of Fredericton, New Brunswick is more ethnically and racially diverse than our existing cellphilms make visible. However, we hope that the call for collaborations component of the project might create space for more and different contributions in order to broaden an understanding of the intersectional nature of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in this territory.



Figure 7: Call for collaborations

I want to share and archive the *New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter* resources in a collaborative way, through social media and a dedicated web presence. I recognize that beyond the erasure of 2SLGBTQ+ histories, there are many other erasures in New Brunswick's social studies classroom and curricula, including the experiences of New Brunswick's Black, Indigenous, and people of color's community histories and experiences. Throughout the *New Brunswick Queer Histories Matter* project, we work to queer the teaching of social studies by questioning the existing curricula and working against heteronormativity, transphobia, white supremacy and settler colonialism. I also want to work with teachers and students to continue to make media, to build on our resources, and to create a New Brunswick social studies classroom that is justice-oriented, and promotes complexity, rather than erasing differences to further entrench homophobia, transphobia, settler colonialism, nationalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy.

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